

AUGUST, 1942

37-211

Incorporating PLAY PICTORIAL

THEATRE WORLD



HERMIONE BADDELEY
HERMIONE CINCOLD
WALTER CRISHAM
NAUNTON WAYNE

9d

Picture by Basil Shackleton.

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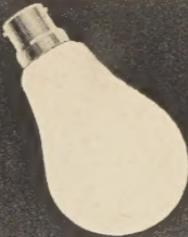
THEATRE WORLD BACK NUMBERS

Back numbers containing special 12-page art souvenirs may be obtained from "Theatre World," 1 Dorset Buildings, Salisbury Square, E.C.4. The prices quoted below are correct at the time of going to press, but are liable to correction from time to time.

1931		1937	
Jan.	-	(5-)	"The Two Bouquets" - - - (2 6)
Feb.	-	(5-)	"Heart's Content" - - - (2 6)
Mar.	-	(5-)	"Home and Beauty" - - - (2 6)
April:	"Stand Up and Sing"	(10-)	"Wise Tomorrow" - - - (5-)
May:	"Autumn Crocus"	(10-)	"London After Dark" - - - (2 6)
June:	"Lean Harvest"	(10-)	Stratford-upon-Avon, 1937, Festival (2 6)
July:	"The Improper Duchess"	(10-)	"Sarah Simple" - - - (2 6)
Aug.:	"Late Night Final"	(10-)	"They Came by Night" - - - (2 6)
Sept.:	"The Midshipmaid"	(10-)	"Judgment Day" - - - (2 6)
Oct.:	"Grand Hotel"	(10-)	"Crest of the Wave" - - - (2 6)
Nov.:	"Elizabeth of England"	(10-)	"Time and the Conways" - - - (2 6)
Dec.:	"Little Catherine"	(10-)	"Richard II" and "The School for Scandal" - - - (2 6)
1932		1938	
Jan.:	"White Horse Inn"	(10-)	"Hide and Seek" — "Autumn" — "Going Greek" - - - (2 6)
Feb.:	"Waltzes from Vienna"	(10-)	Feb. "Oh, Letty" and "Room Service" - - - (2 6)
Mar.:	"Helen"	(10-)	Mar. "Three Sisters" - - - (2 6)
April:	"The Green Pack"	(10-)	April "Idiot's Delight" - - - (2 6)
May:	"I Lived With You"	(10-)	May "The Merchant of Venice" - - - (2 6)
June:	"The Miracle"	(10-)	June "Banana Ridge" - - - (2 6)
July:	"Out of the Bottle"	(10-)	Aug. "Spring Meeting" - - - (2 6)
Aug.:	"Evensong"	(10-)	Sept. "Lo's Wife" - - - (2 6)
Sept.:	"Casanova"	(10-)	Oct. "Dear Octopus" - - - (7 6)
Oct.:	"Too True to be Good"	(10-)	Nov. "The Corn is Green" - - - (7 6)
Nov.:	"The D'Barry"	(10-)	Dec. "Quiet Wedding" - - - (5-)
Dec.:	"Service"	(10-)	
1933		1939	
Jan.:	"Another Language"	(10-)	"Under Your Hat" - - - (2 6)
Feb.:	"The Streets of London"	(10-)	"The Flashing Stream" - - - (7 6)
Mar.:	"Richard of Bordeaux"	(10-)	Mar. "Geneva" - - - (2 6)
April:	"Jolly Roger"	(10-)	April "Johnson Over Jordan" - - - (5-)
May:	"Wild Violets"	(10-)	May "The Dancing Years" - - - (O.P.)
June:	"When Ladies Meet"	(10-)	June "The Women" - - - (2 6)
July:	"The Late Christopher Bean"	(10-)	July "Of Mice and Men" - - - (2 6)
Aug.:	"Proscenium"	(10-)	Aug. "Black and Blue" - - - (2 6)
Sept.:	"Ten Minute Alibi" and "Eighti Bells"	(10-)	Herbert Farjeon's Little Revue - - - (2 6)
Oct.:	"Ball at the Savoy"	(10-)	Sept. " - - - (2 6)
Nov.:	"Nymph Errant"	(10-)	Oct. " - - - (2 6)
Dec.:	"Gay Divorce"	(10-)	Nov. "Old Vic on Tour" - - - (5-)
		Dec. "French for Love" - - - (1 3)	
1934		1940	
Jan.:	"The Old Folks at Home"	(10-)	"Black Velvet" - - - (3 9)
Feb.:	"The Wind and the Rain"	(10-)	Jan. "All Clear" - - - (1 3)
Mar.:	"Afterwards"	(10-)	Feb. "Lights Up" - - - (1 3)
April:	"Conversation Piece"	(10-)	Mar. "Light of Heart" - - - (5-)
May:	"Three Sisters"	(10-)	April "Jeanie" - - - (2 6)
June:	"Why Not To-night?"	(10-)	May "Up and Doing" - - - (2 6)
July:	"Touch Wood"	(10-)	June "Swinging the Gate" - - - (2 6)
Aug.:	"Queen of Scots"	(10-)	July "Women Aren't Angels" - - - (5-)
Sept.:	"The Maitlands"	(10-)	Aug. "Cottage to Let" - - - (5-)
Oct.:	"The Shining Hour"	(10-)	Sept. "Rebecca" - - - (2 6)
Nov.:	"Murder in Mayfair"	(10-)	Oct. "The Devil's Disciple" - - - (2 6)
Dec.:	"Sweet Aloes"	(10-)	Nov. "Arts Theatre Ballet" - - - (5-)
1935		1941	
Jan.:	"Hamlet"	(10-)	Lunch-Time Shakespeare - - - (2 6)
Feb.:	"Blackbirds of 1935"	(10-)	Jan. "Berkeley Square" - - - (2 6)
Mar.:	"Jill, Darling"	(10-)	Feb. "Dear Brutus" - - - (7 6)
April:	"Man of Yesterday"	(10-)	Mar. "Diversion No. 2" - - - (2 6)
May:	"Worse Things Happen at Sea"	(10-)	April "No Time for Comedy" - - - (2 6)
June:	"Glamorous Night"	(10-)	May "Shepherd's Pie" - - - (7 6)
July:	"Tovarich"	(10-)	June "Rise Above It" - - - (5-)
Aug.:	"Noan"	(10-)	July "Blithe Spirit" - - - (5-)
Sept.:	"Night Must Fall"	(10-)	Aug. "Quiet Week-End" - - - (10-)
Oct.:	"Full House"	(10-)	Sept. "Fun and Games" - - - (2 6)
Nov.:	"The Two Mrs. Carrolls"	(10-)	Oct. "Old Vic and Sadler's Wells" - - - (5-)
Dec.:	"Romeo and Juliet"	(10-)	Nov. "Jupiter Laughs" - - - (10-)
1936		1942	
Jan.:	"Call It a Day"	(10-)	Jan. "Get a Load of This" - - - (10-)
Feb.:	"To-night at 8.30"	(10-)	Feb. "The Man Who Came to Dinner" - - - (2 6)
Mar.:	"Follow the Sun"	(10-)	Mar. "The Morning Star" - - - (5-)
April:	"Red Night"	(10-)	April "Old Acquaintance" - - - (5-)
May:	"The Happy Hypocrite"	(10-)	May "Blossom Time" - - - (10-)
June:	"Rise and Shine"	(10-)	June "Watch on the Rhine" - - - (5-)
July:	"After October"	(10-)	July "Fine and Dandy" - - - (9d.)
Aug.:	"The Lady of La Paz"	(10-)	
Sept.:	"Spring Tide"	(10-)	Special Souvenirs:
Oct.:	"Careless Rapture"	(10-)	Chu Chin Chow - - - (6d.)
Nov.:	"Mademoiselle"	(10-)	Stratford-upon-Avon (1941 Season) - - - (6d.)
Dec.:	"Parnell"	(10-)	



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FOR FEMININE HYGIENE

THEATRE WORLD

Vol. XXXVII, No. 211

AUGUST, 1942



Portrait by Judith Craig

Betty Ann Davies

Betty Ann Davies, one of our most gifted young revue artistes, who with Megs Jenkins, Vida Hope, Joan Sterndale Bennett, Max Adrian, Frith Banbury and Geoffrey Dunn heads the cast of Herbert Farjeon's new Little Revue, *Light and Shade*, at the Ambassadors. The revue is presented by Herbert Farjeon and Lionel Falck, who were associated in the management of those brilliant shows, *Nine Sharp* and *Farjeon's Little Revue*, at the Little Theatre in 1938 and 1939.

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Theatre World

(Incorporating PLAY PICTORIAL)

Vol. XXXVII
No. 211

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August,
1942

THE pendulum swings. A month or two back we were bemoaning the dearth of serious plays in London; wondering why the divine happy medium had no part in the ever-increasing number of revues. During the past few weeks, however, two new revues failed dismally to find a foothold: the goose stopped laying the golden eggs, and it becomes apparent that a new breed of bird is required to start the good work again. In other words the theatre-going public after a spate of this lightest form of entertainment begins to look for something different. From now on, we prophesy only revues with a fresh angle or a string of well-known stars will make the pace.

AT the moment of writing there are in Town two Shakespeare productions not quickly to be forgotten. The one, John Gielgud's *Macbeth*, will be specially featured in this magazine next month, it is hoped: the other, the Old Vic Company's production of *Othello* at the New, will unfortunately have given place to the *Merry Wives* by the time this appears in print. *Othello* was produced too late for a full review in this issue, but we cannot let the occasion pass without paying tribute to one of the finest pieces of Shakespearean acting it has been our good fortune to witness. And not, mark you, from a native of these Islands, but from a Czechoslovakian, who sought refuge here from the Nazis only three short years ago. Frederick Valk is a great actor by any

standard, and he could not have set himself a higher than his own full-blooded interpretation of the heart-torn Moor, or his own flawless understanding of the poet's intent.

Robert Atkins is also producing Shakespeare at the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park; further proof that London has not forgotten the Bard.

In addition to these, the West End now has some half-a-dozen or so serious plays running, four of them inspired by the war or its implications. Clifford Odet's strong play, *Awake and Sing*, is due to join these, we hear, and will follow the season of New Russian Ballet at the Cambridge, illustrated elsewhere in this issue, which leaves London for a provincial tour. It is good to think that London, the centre of war-time relaxation, still has room for such productions.

THERE is also a marked liking for the more tuneful; one by one all the old melodious musical comedies are finding a welcome re-birth. *The Belle of New York* is another old favourite coming to the West End shortly, where *The Maid of the Mountains* and *Rose Marie* have already found a sure welcome, and others, like *The Desert Song*, are getting a big reception on tour.

Wild Rose, starring Jessie Matthews, had a promising opening at Manchester before coming to the Princes, as did George Black's production of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, which has just begun its run at Prince of Wales.

F.S.

Wherever smoking is permitted—ABDULLAS FOR CHOICE



JOHN GIELGUD as Macbeth

is nothing if not frail looking, but for all her dramatic gift she has a fey quality that sits ill on so calculating an instigator of murder. This no doubt is why her best acting comes in the sleep walking scene.

There are excellent performances from other members of the cast, notably from Leon Quartermaine as a lovable Banquo, whose ghostly re-appearance in the magnificently staged banquet scene somehow emphasises the gentleness and uprightness of his character. Nicholas Hannen brings dignity to the old King, Duncan, and Francis Lister provides a gem of acting as Macduff, particularly when he hears news of the murder of his wife and son. There are three notable Weird Sisters in Ernest Thesiger, Annie Esmond and Dorothy Green.

Michael Ayrton and John Minton, who are responsible for the décor, have done their work brilliantly. In fact the staging as a whole, together with William Walton's impressive incidental music, is nicely calculated to emphasise the fact that *Macbeth* is a first-class murder thriller as well as the vehicle for some of the finest poetry in our language.

F.S.

"Macbeth"

(Piccadilly, July 8th)

THIS is undoubtedly John Gielgud's play, and also the most distinguished production of the season, if not of all seasons since the war well-nigh banished Shakespeare from the West End.

It is generally held that in *Macbeth* Shakespeare created a role that is unactable as a harmonious whole; certainly no two Shakespeare lovers seem to agree about any one interpretation. And yet I would defy anyone to see John Gielgud in the part, and, putting aside all petty quibbles (and how petty such quibbles can be!), not admit that here is a towering performance of magnificent insight and of a maturity unusual even for Gielgud himself. Never have I heard the "Tomorrow" speech more nobly spoken, or sensed more clearly the inevitability of the fate awaiting this man whose lust for power outstripped his capabilities as a murderer. Witnessing Gielgud's performance it seemed futile to drag up the old arguments about the incompatibility of soldier-man-of-action and sensitive poet. Are men so well defined as made for either action or conscience? It scarcely seems so in this year of international slaughter.

Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies as Lady Macbeth is not so happily cast. It is not so much that by tradition one comes to expect a woman Diana-like of physique, deep voiced and domineering, and Miss Ffrangcon-Davies

"Lifeline"

(Duchess, July 2nd)

HAD this fine play been a film, colossal money would have been expended on shipwreck, bombing and torpedo scenes, with only half the effect. For, although the whole action takes place in the cramped quarters of the saloon of a 5,000-ton tramp ship, we are aware of every phase of the bitter war at sea which is the fate of many a ship like S.S. "Clydesdale."

This is an epic of the Merchant Service brilliantly portrayed, which is also gripping drama from first to last. There is, however, humour in plenty, as one would expect from the crew of a tramp steamer, and enough nautical language to make any censor's blue pencil quiver.

The "Clydesdale" carries petrol, a cargo almost too precious to be entrusted to her creaking old engines. Chief Engineer Jim Lloyd does his best, but she is forced to leave convoy, and in the ensuing battles with U-boat and Luftwaffe her cargo is fired. The Captain gives orders to abandon ship, but later some of the crew return, fight the flames and bring the "Clydesdale," groaning in every joint, safe to port.

Magnificent acting comes from the all-men cast. Wilfrid Lawson is the dour Captain to the life, a fine performance of an easily recognisable type. Frank Pettingell has never done anything better than his Jim Lloyd, and the deep friendship which exists between these two, veiled though it is in much mutual abuse, is moving in the ex-

New Shows of the Month

treme. Arthur Sinclair is the Irish Steward, Casey, who, after the manner of sailors, sees a portent in everything, and from all accounts also has a wife in every port. Other contrasting types are Peter Launder, the embittered First Officer, played with the right emphasis by Terence de Marney. Ronnie, the Galley Boy, new to the sea, but of the right stuff, played with considerable skill by Alan Wren, and the two "wartime sailors," Dennis Comber, Third Officer, and Fred Judd, Wireless Operator. Guy Verney takes the part of young Comber, the son of the owner of the ship, who proves himself in the "Clydesdale's" ordeal, and Lloyd Pearson brings a cheery note as the North Country Wireless Operator whose big theme of conversation is his adored wife—an unworthy wife, so it transpires. There is excellent work from Robert Beatty, Wally Patch, Tom Leybourne and Philip Valentine; and a word must go to Michael Redgrave's brilliant direction, and Michael Ralph's realistic set. This profoundly moving play should not be missed.

F.S.

"Salt of the Earth"

(Vaudeville, July 9th)

MICHAEL EGAN'S new play is a fine tribute to the obscure Fighting French—to all the French of occupied regions whose faith in ultimate release has never flagged and whose militant spirit, despite the circumscribing effect of Nazi presences and tyrannical oppression, burns true and undefeated.

All the action takes place in the living-room of a Normandy farm house and with a few adjustments in the interests of dramatic unity, covers the period from June 1940 to October 1941. This room sees the Bourdin family reacting to the dire events

Frank Pettingell as the Scots Chief Engineer, Frank Lloyd, and Wilfrid Lawson as the Captain, have a passage-at-arms over the aspisdistra Lloyd has bequeathed to the saloon. A lighter moment in *Lifeline*, one of the strongest plays the West End has seen for a long time. The author is Norman Armstrong.

Picture by
Swarbrick Studios

of these days, each according to his individual cast of mind, but one and all as proud, uncrushable, free beings. To this room come bewildered French officers; stiff-necked, fanatical Nazi military officials; billeted German soldiers, one of whom is a good man spoilt by a bad creed; a pair of French *embusqués* with hopes centred on funds in America, typical of the black-hearted element that helped to bring about France's downfall; poilus, privates, French police officers; an English pilot officer in hiding, and another Englishman posing successfully as an American and duping the Nazis in more ways than one.

This is strong drama with a message of cheer; such determination and long-suffering are not vain. The Bourdin family are played by Milton Rosmer, Tristan Rawson, Louise Hampton, Leueen MacGrath, John Carol; the pilot officer and his friend the Cockney-American by Ian Lubbock and John Slater. Eric Albury, James Donald and Geoffrey Wincott are consistently convincing as three distinct Nazi types pulled by the same strings; Marjorie Mars and George Howe as the Laroches bring a sinister sophistication to the humble room.

E.H.

"All's Fair"

(Whitehall, July 6th)

SOME sixteen items of song, dance, burlesque, ballet and naughty innuendo are the ingredients of Alfred Esaile's continuous revue, which, in the tradition of his non-stop revues at the Prince of Wales, makes somewhat of a departure for the more sober Whitehall Theatre. Phyllis Dixey ("the girl the Lord Chamberlain banned") and Freddie Forbes share the honours. Phyllis Dixey's soft-voiced, intimate causeries with the audience, pro-



mising all kinds of rewards for docile and patient listening, lead up to a host of pretty poses; Freddie Forbes' humour is all the more potent from his own clear enjoyment of it. Charles (with Partner) is a really courageous "master of balance" and Angela Barrie's tough type of femininity makes a nice change. E.H.

"The Springtime of Others"

(*Arts, July 15th*)

THE Arts Theatre Group of Actors (director, Alec Clunes) broke new ground with this three-act play from the French of Jean-Jacques Bernard. Slight of plot and with only three main personages, every nuance and every gesture mattered; all the more reason to commend the economy of emotional expenditure, the good use made of silences and shrugs and arrested movements. The unusual triangle theme of mother — daughter — daughter's husband, with a by no means trifling contribution from a character who never appears in person, was firmly and convincingly handled, and the sets were excellent. Maurice Colbourne produced and the players were Mary Hinton, Isolde Denham, Jeremy Hawk and Dora Barton. Tchekov's "The Swan Song" preceded, with Alec Clunes and Clarence Bigge. E.H.

REVIVALS



WANDA
ROTHA

who has made a big hit with a fine dramatic performance as Sadie Thompson in the revival of Somerset Maugham's tense drama.

Portrait
by
Ridgway
West

"Rain"

(*St. Martin's, June 24th*)

INTELLIGENT casting combines with intuitive interpretation of subtleties to make Reginald Long's production of Somerset Maugham's *Rain*, at St. Martin's Theatre, a memorable one. So much here depends on the skilful deployment of all the intricacies of character; so much on the effective exploitation of the background of interminable rain and tropic

heat, with their influence on a handful of fine-drawn personalities marooned in a trader's store-cum-hotel in the South Seas. The well-night unending beat of the rain and the unbroken psychological conflict of varied unstable mentalities maintain a tenseness of ever more dramatic implication.

Wanda Rothera's Sadie Thompson, by turns dynamic, defiant, terrified, appealing and distraught, is played without a false note. Margaret Withers gives a sensitive portrayal of Mrs. Davidson, harshly yet courageously high-principled; her unlovely rigorousness and the stern inhumanity of G. H. Mulcaster's Rev. Alfred Davidson evoke an equal measure of pity and scorn. Mabel Twemlow and Clare Harris are outstandingly satisfying: the former as Ameena, Trader Horn's woman, a jolly, colourful rotundity with a gorgeous laugh and an inconsiderable mental age; the latter as the pale-blue, tender-hearted wife of the doctor, anxious only to keep the peace, her very scrap of everlasting needlework a monument of dainty ineffectiveness. Fred Groves' Joe Horn shows a good blend of semi-drunken torpor and sane home-made philosophy. Arthur Maude's Dr. MacPhail, with his unemotional and faintly world-weary matter-of-factness, provides a splendid foil to Davidson's fanaticism.

The dresses are superbly right, from Mrs. MacPhail's insipid pretties and Mrs. Davidson's grim, grey concession to tropic heat, to the glow of Sadie's bravery and the Rev. Alfred Davidson's impeccable neatness.

E.H.

"Rose
Marie"
(*Stoll, July 16th*)

MARJORIE
BROWNE

has the biggest part of her career in the name part of the popular *Rose Marie* revival at the Stoll.



YOU will not be disappointed in this delightful revival of the famous "romance of the Canadian Rockies." Though suitably brought up-to-date in parts, nothing of the original charm has been lost, and the familiar tunes have the same haunting quality. Marjorie Browne is a vivacious Rose Marie la Flamme, and sings well, with Raymond Newell in strong support as Jim Kenyon, George Lacy as an excellent Hard-Boiled Herman and Phyllis Monkman as Lady Jane.

F.S.



HERMIONE BADDELEY



HERMIONE GINGOLD



WALTER CRISHAM



NAUNTON WAYNE

The first scene, "Meet a Body," in which the stars, together with Elizabeth Welch (left) and Zoë Gail (right) are questioned by a policeman (George Gower) about a corpse, which is none other than that of the Opening Chorus.

"*Sky High*"

THIS new revue, which Tom Arnold presents at the Phoenix Theatre, has all the qualities that make for first-rate entertainment. The production is slick and colourful; there is abundant wit, spectacle and tunefulness, and above all, four stars in Hermione Baddeley, Hermione Gingold, Walter Crisham and Naunton Wayne whose technique as revue artistes is of the highest degree.

Walter Crisham as producer of this scintillating show merits a special word, and once again Berkeley Sutcliffe demonstrates his undoubted flair in the realm of décor and costumes. Lydia Sokolova is responsible for the many delightful dance ensembles. These, with Harold Collins and his Broadcasting Orchestra, and of course the clever supporting cast, which includes much charm and talent in the shape of Elizabeth Welch, Zoë Gail and Prudence Hyman, ensure an evening's light-hearted entertainment as good as any in Town.

PICTURES BY BASIL SHACKLETON



"JUNGLE HIDE MY MAN"

A scene from Edward Horan and Nina Warner Hooke's impressive number, showing Elizabeth Welch (left) singing "Jungle Hold My Man" with dramatic intensity.

Most colourful item in the revue is this magnificently staged dance to music composed by Edythe Baker. The picture below is from Scene 2, with Walter Crisham resplendent as the Matador, and Prudence Hyman as the Dancer seated at his feet.

"ARENA"





" ARENA "

(Left) : Prudence Hyman and Walter Crisham in another scene from "Arena," in which these two clever dancers convey with brilliance the romantic atmosphere surrounding Spain's national sport.



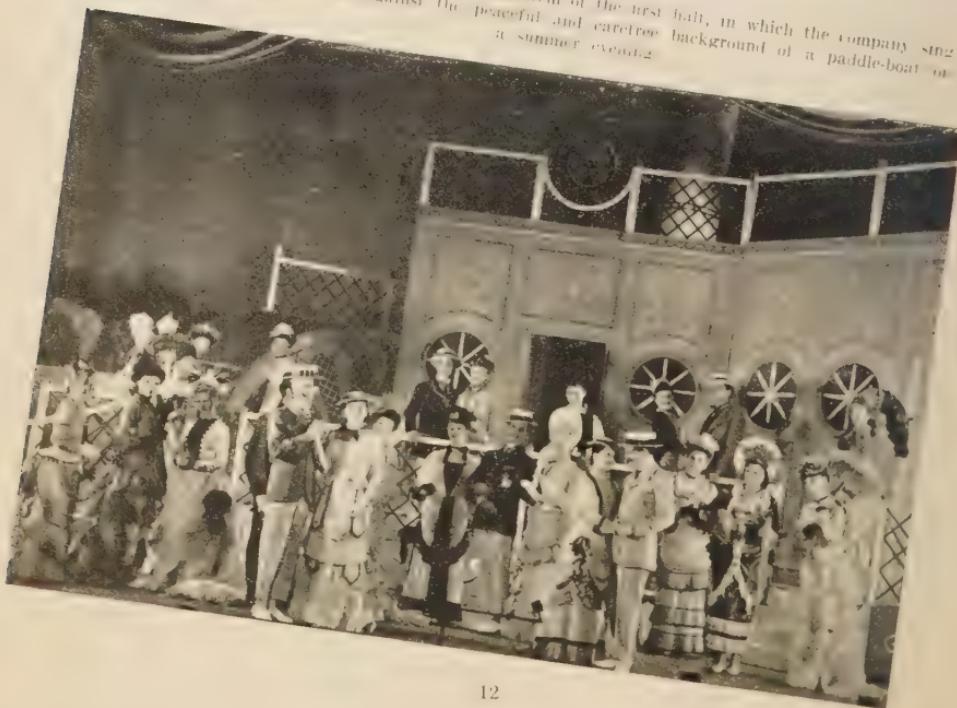
" LITTLE MOTHER "

Naunton Wayne and Betty Hare in an amusing skit on the Chehovian type of Russian drama



"PADDLE-BOAT DREAM"

Two scenes from the delightful last item of the first half, in which the company sing Edwardian songs against the peaceful and carefree background of a paddle-boat on a summer evening.





"MID-DAY STAR"

Phyllis Pearce, Naunton Wayne, Betty Hare and Hermione Baddeley in Denis Wallock's wicked skit on *The Morning Star*, and below Zoe Gall, George Carden and the Girls in "New Blue in Your Eyes", one of the hit numbers of the show.

"NEW BLUE IN YOUR EYES"





"EUROPA"



"WHICH WAY
THE WIND BLEW"



PARK MEETING

"MERMAIDS"





HERMIONE BADDELEY in unusually prim mood in the charming costume she wears in "Paddle-Boat Dream."



HERMIONE GINGOLD as a hopeful but none too young actress in "Which Witch," a brilliant dissertation on Macbeth's famous witches.



WALTER CRISHAM as a choirboy—somewhat pained because his voice has just broken—in "The Norwood Nightingale."



NAUNTON WAYNE has some satirical comments to make on political internees in his monologue "Pleasure Island."

"BROADWAY SLAVE"

Elizabeth Welch has another impressive number in "Broadway Slave," by Nina Warner Hooke and Edward Horan. On the right she is seen singing this song in an all-white setting of great beauty



FINALE

(Below) : The company gather together before the curtain in the grand pantomime finale.



Stage Door Hussy

THE BANE OF THE
YOUNG STAR'S LIFE

says *Eric Johns*



SINCE the disappearance of the Stage Door Johnny during the last war the artists' entrance to the theatre has been besieged by the Stage Door Hussy.

The Edwardian Johnny was a harmless young man who invited Gaiety and Daly's chorus girls across to supper at Rules or Romano's, and according to legend drank champagne from their dainty slippers. The contemporary Hussy is a shameless young woman with no time for the chorus. She launches a direct attack upon the stars themselves, letting them know in a high-handed tone that they owe their pinnacled position to her, as a member of the public. This obligation, so she argues, gives her the right to demand a place in their private lives.

Every day one reads of the promised liberation of oppressed peoples, but no section of humanity would welcome freedom more joyously than those stars whose private lives are menaced by the relentless tyranny of the Stage Door Hussy.

This public nuisance fondly imagines that the price she pays for her gallery seat entitles her to lie in wait for the star at the stage door. Not content to merely gaze upon him, she fires a barrage of personal questions . . . questions so intimate that she would not dare to direct them at her employer, her dressmaker, or the girl who serves her morning coffee . . . "I saw you at Maidenhead last Sunday. Who was the blonde?" "Who are you taking out to supper tonight?" "What is this rumour about your divorce?"

Some stars are afraid of the Hussy's insolent "how, when, where, and why?" They crumple on the first encounter and consequently for ever fight a losing battle. Once I emerged from Drury Lane stage door after midnight, accompanied by a star with whom I had been discussing business after the show. A brazen-faced Hussy leapt forward and almost hissed in my companion's face. "Where the hell have

you been? By waiting here I've lost my train to Balham. How's it looking for a lift?" I discreetly withdrew to the car, leaving the embarrassed actor to placate the minx to the best of his ability. "Who was that?" I enquired when he finally joined me. "Oh, I don't know—just a girl who hangs round the stage door to see me three or four nights a week." "But you surely don't tolerate such arrogance?" I protested. "What can I do?" he cried helplessly. "After all, these people are my bread and butter."

Then I cited Duse's career as the perfect example of how a star should treat her worshippers. Duse maintained that she was the public's servant when on the stage from eight till eleven each evening. Playgoers paid to see her act, and she acted so magnificently that no artist has given them such staggering value for their money since that wet April night in Pittsburgh eighteen years ago when, waiting to gain admittance to the theatre, she contracted pneumonia which in the space of a few tragic days proved fatal.

Once the curtain fell, Duse declared that, having fulfilled her part of the evening's contract, the rest of the time was her own. Refusing to do what her public expected of her, she consequently earned a reputation for being somewhat "difficult." She had no objection to being a public servant, but she steadfastly declined to be the public's slave. There was not a single exception to prove her inexorable rule. She even turned a deaf ear to the King of Wurtemburg when he tapped her dressing-room door in order to lay a bouquet at her feet. She merely reminded him from the other side of the panel that her rule could be broken for no one, not even a crowned head!

A handsome young actor was literally driven out of his old-world home in Hampstead, just before the war, simply because bare-faced Husses hung over the garden

(Continued on page 32)



THE ENCHANTED LAKE

One of the loveliest scenes in "Wonderland," in which, against a background of undersea magic, the dancers, as the Swan Princess, Water Nymphs, Water Flowers, Foam, White Coral, etc., achieve an atmosphere of sheer enchantment.

WONDERLAND

An Entertainment
of Infinite Variety

PICTURES

BY

TUNBRIDGE-SEDWICK

Scenes from Jay Pomeroy's New Russian Ballet Production with the London Symphony Orchestra, as presented at Cambridge Theatre, London.



(Left): *The mad Tzar* (Tom Linden) embraces his favourite (Diana Gould). This satirical ballet has many intriguing features, not the least being the use made of the white screens seen each side of the picture below. It is by means of the wording thrown on these screens at each stage of the ballet that the "career" of Lieutenant "Blot" (Kije) is unfolded.



An amusing moment showing the Tzar's soldiers on parade

WONDERLAND, Jay Pomeroy's lavish and spectacular production, is exactly what it professes to be—an orgy of music and dancing as enchanting as any seen in the theatre for a very long time.

It challenges no comparisons, since it is unique of its kind. Originality and colour are its outstanding characteristics.

A few notes may not be out of place here on the various ballets that go to make up this delightful entertainment.

The first of the two ballets which precede the main spectacle *Wonderland* is the *Fantaisie Russe*, an allegory to music from Mussorgsky's "Pictures from an Exhibition."

It depicts a typical street scene in Old Russia, with its motley crowd of beggars, merchants, nuns, musicians and the inevitable cocotte. Among the assembly is a blind beggar whose sight is suddenly restored as a golden light breaks in the sky heralding the dawn of a better world. As the curtain

(Right): *The marriage of the First Court Lady (Barbara Jdanova) to the mythical General "Blot," who has by now been promoted and given great honour in the State. Subsequently he is disgraced and sent into exile; a fact that greatly grieves the Tzar, who is later plunged into deep sorrow at the news of the General's "death."*



The wayward daughter (Pauline Grant), behaves with unseemly levity at the funeral of her shadowy father.

descends we see the crowd following him toward the sunlight.

The second ballet *Lieutenant Kije* is founded on a tale of Pushkin to music by Prokofieff. The story is a political satire, the humour of which is eloquently reflected in the music.

It concerns a nervous orderly officer who, in his anxiety to complete his report on time, makes a blot after the designation "Lieutenant," thereby creating in regi-

mental records the nebulous Lieutenant "Blot." This personage has, therefore, no official existence, but we learn from reports that he is successively exiled, pardoned and married, the while he is promoted to high rank. At his death he is buried with all the pomp and ceremony due to his exalted station. Even the mad Tzar Paul mourns him as the best man in his Kingdom. Such is fame!

It is a deliciously satirical and witty episode brilliantly executed.



THE WONDER TREE

The first tableau in "Wonderland." Audrey Seed is seen as the Cat, dancing in front of the Wondertree.

Wonderland occupies the second half of the programme. Colourful and spectacular, it presents a feast for the eye and the ear based on the music of Tchaikowsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Glazunow.

A Nurse is singing her baby to sleep with a plaintive and haunting lullaby. She tells the child a medley of fairy tales which, in the sleep that follows, come to life in the child's subconscious mind and take on the appearance of reality.

The Wondertree, under which the child

is sleeping, and the pussy-cat that plays around it, gradually fade, and we see unfolded the story of the Tzar Zaltan. Here we are introduced to "The Enchanted Lake" with its water nymphs, its Swan Princess and the thousand and one things that give the underwater world its enchantment and its mystery.

This again merges into "Happy Town," an exquisitely humorous little ballet to the music of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Bee's Wedding." The Tzar is seen bewailing the loss

"Wonderland"

THE ENCHANTED LAKE

Water Nymphs dancing in "The Enchanted Lake Ballet."



HAPPY TOWN

In this gaily coloured ballet we see how through the good offices of the Bumble Bee (Tom Linden), the Tzaritza (Pat Smylie) is restored to the Tzar Zaltan (David Davenport) in spite of the intrigues of the three wicked women.

of his Tzaritza and his son who have been spirited away through the wiles of the three wicked women. He tries to ward off the bees that seem to fill the air, until the Bumble Bee enters, stings the three old women, and discloses to the exasperated monarch that he can restore to him his lost ones. The curtain falls on the Tzar and his Son following the Tzaritza through the gates of "Happy Town."

The next Tableau is "The Magic Mirror." The Queen and her Court are being entertained by a Troubadour who flatters her

vanity until she demands that the magic mirror be brought so that she can see the reflection of the most beautiful woman in her Kingdom. She expresses her elation in an exuberant dance, but when she again asks to see herself in the mirror she beholds instead the reflection of her step-daughter, Snow White, who presently appears with her Courtiers. The Queen's gallants are vanquished by the newcomers in a brilliantly conceived duelling scene, and the Queen, in a paroxysm of rage and envy, falls to the floor and dies.



THE MAGIC MIRROR

Two scenes from the lovely "Snow White" Ballet. Top, the Queen (Diana Gould) demands that the mirror show her the reflection of the most beautiful woman in her kingdom, and is enraged to see the image of her step-daughter, Snow White. Above: The duelling scene between the protagonists of the Queen and Snow White

(Left): The Tzar Dodon (David Davenport) and the Persian Princess in the impressive bullet "Coq d'Or."



COQ D'OR

The fourth Tableau is set to the music of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Coq d'Or." Tzar Dodon arrives at the head of an army to subdue the country of the Persian Princess who ensnares him by her charms and proves to him that she can win more conquests by her beauty than he by force of arms. She is really the creation of a Magician who thus takes his revenge on the Tzar for an old-standing wrong



The fisherman (Paul Federoff) catches the Goldfish (Audrey Seed) in the Magic Pool, who brings him gifts for his ambitious wife.



GOLDFISH

Three scenes from the charming ballet "Goldfish." Above, the fisherman's wife upbraids her husband and demands even higher estate.



When the wife finally demands to be made a goddess she is reduced again to her former poverty.

The fifth Tableau "Goldfish" depicts the story of the greedy and ambitious wife who demands of her fisherman husband that he ensnare a goldfish which can bring her, from the magic pool, everything she desires. At each appearance of the goldfish the wife exacts another favour until in the end, wishing to become a goddess, she loses all and is reduced to penury.

The Finale is a riot of colour and movement—a fitting finish to a really first-class entertainment. The décor by Hein Heckroth is both brilliant and exciting. It has originality, design and harmony.

* * *

The choreography and libretto are by Catherine Devillier, a product of the Moscow



THE FINALE

The curtain fell on the Russian Opera at the Boston Opera House on Saturday evening, April 21, 1917, after a performance of "The Queen of Spades" by Tchaikovsky, conducted by John H. Richardson, and "The Golden Cockerel" by Stravinsky, conducted by Nikolai Stravinsky.

It was a most successful and interesting evening. The "Queen of Spades" was a masterpiece of musical drama, and the "Golden Cockerel" was a brilliant example of modern Russian music. The performances were excellent, and the audience was greatly pleased.

The "Queen of Spades" was performed by the Boston Opera House Orchestra, under the direction of John H. Richardson, and the "Golden Cockerel" was performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Nikolai Stravinsky.

John H. Richardson

Echoes from Broadway

By our American Correspondent E. MAWBY GREEN

BY strange coincidence John Steinbeck's *The Moon is Down* is housed at the Martin Beck Theatre where Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine* played for 376 performances before taking to the road. Memories of the Hellman drama still stick to the Martin Beck, and there is nothing in *The Moon is Down* effective enough to drive out those former Hellman highspots. By comparison the Steinbeck piece is split into eight scenes and is shorter by about thirty minutes. The characters emerge sketchy, undeveloped and only occasionally show signs of moving or convincing you.

Considerable controversy has arisen because the leading Nazi, Colonel Lanser (Otto Kruger), is not the cruel, callous Nazi official we hear about. He is shown more of a human being—a man with a conscience that creeps up on him when reminded of the futility of all the despair and destruction that was part of the last war. The objection has been that such a character is inclined to invite sympathy—nice Nazis should not be depicted at this time. Our impression was that Otto Kruger is too kind and sensitive an actor to make you believe he could ever last long as a hard Nazi chief, which doubtless makes this character more sympathetic than was originally intended by the author. Colonel Lanser says: *You shoot one hostage and make a hundred enemies for each one shot. You cannot win in this way*, such tactics. He steels himself to give the orders for the executions, but his "it hurts me more than it does you" attitude does make you wonder at times how he has lasted so long in command. Such a sign of weakness would not be tolerated, as is clearly shown in several of the young Nazis who have grown up under the Hitler régime and cannot reconcile the moods of their chief, Colonel Lanser, with the fanatics drilled into them by the Fuehrer.

As is widely known by this time, *The Moon is Down* is concerned with a troop of Nazis who invade a small mining town that could quite easily be in Norway, and proceed to take over. The inhabitants



THE MOON IS DOWN. From left: Dorothy McGuire, Helen Cherry, Otto Kruger.

resent the courage and determination of the town and when the Nazis at last get the upper hand they expect to find themselves invincible. Finally, as the Nazi general, living Major Raoul Malaury, comes in as hostage in a desperate effort to invite a stay, the inhabitants and soldiers that continue to hold out prove their determination. The final scene shows the paper as the town's last hope, the young Nazis who have lost their will to make this change and the people who have Nazi remains.

Despite the poor reviews given to *The Moon is Down* by the critics, it is a good, honest, well-acted, moving play, and it deserves the attention of those who are interested in Mr. Steinbeck's work.

Wrath), Oscar Serlin, producer of *The Moon is Down*, announced the closing of the play after fifty-six performances, but arrangements were made to continue the Broadway run indefinitely under a different management. *The Moon is Down* is not nearly as effective a stage drama as was Mr. Steinbeck's earlier success *Of Mice and Men*, and Miss Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine* still remains the best of the Nazi plays produced over here, even though the latter fetched from the films practically half as much.

Another Air Raid Drama

WE have also had a production of Paul Vincent Carroll's *The Strings, My Lord, are False*, which came to these shores with glowing notices from Ireland, where, we understand, the play is still on. The action is laid in one of the steel towns in the Firth of Clyde, when Scotland was having a taste of the 1941 blitz. After two earlier attempts this season to interest an audience in this sort of thing, *The Wookey* and *Heart of a City*, Mr. Carroll's drama of sirens and air destruction offers nothing unusual, except, perhaps, a bout between Canon Courtenay and a High Order of the Catholic Church, which Mr. Carroll had given us before in two of his previous plays. Apparently the reaction to air raids are just the same in London or Scotland. The only thing different is the accent—the change from Cockney in *The Wookey* to an inconsistent Scotch and Irish in *The Strings, My Lord, are False*. Public morale is severely tried and manages to hold up in both places. Mr. Carroll's endeavour is an expensive one, recruiting a large cast and two sets. Possibly the thought of air-raid horrors strikes too near home these days, with Broadway now submitting to a dim-out, plays of this nature take on a depressing atmosphere. Some well-known actors were engaged, including Ruth Gordon, Walter Hampden, Colin Keith-Johnston, Art Smith and Margot Grahame. Miss Grahame as a good prostitute (there was one in *The Wookey*, too—Carol Goodner) was about the only thing in *The Strings, My Lord, are False* that kept you awake and interested. A shocking thing to say about a play of such high intentions! Perhaps it was Eliza Kazan's direction, or the ill-fitting acting, that prevented Mr. Carroll's drama from

emerging as a less diffuse and more distinguished piece of work. Anyway, it is too late now; it closed after fifteen performances, with Emlyn Williams' *Yesterday's Magic*, after fifty-five times in New York.

Clever Suspense Play

ON the brighter side of the picture is *Uncle Harry*, by Thomas Job, which Clifford Hayman has produced in association with Lennie Hatten. Eva Le Gallienne and Joseph Schildkraut are appearing in it, which is the first time in ten years they have played together, the last occasion being in an unforgettable revival of *Liliom*.

Mr. Schildkraut is seen in *Uncle Harry* as a meek, middle-aged man, who since his mother's death has lived at home with his two sisters, Hester and Lettie. They have spoiled him completely, and constantly squabble over his comforts. He has them eating out of both his hands. When he learns that his girl since schooldays (Beverly Roberts) has grown tired of waiting for him to shake off his sisters and is to marry someone else, he begins planning all sorts of nasty things to win her back. He gets Lettie (Miss Le Gallienne) to buy some poison from the drug store under the pretence of using it on their ageing dog, but slips the poison into sister Hester's (Adelaide Klein) good-night cocoa instead, and beguiles the unsuspecting Miss Le Gallienne to take it up to Hester in her room. A little later, sister Hester is heard dying a violent death. Since Mr. Schildkraut has planted the seeds of suspicion so firmly in Miss Le Gallienne's shoes, no one will believe him when he confesses and wants to take the responsibility for the murder and get his sister released. Instead of helping to secure her freedom, Miss Le Gallienne prefers to take the blame and punish her frustrated brother by leaving him to live alone and rust in the scene of his crime.

The 1909 period settings by Howard Bay and costumes by Peggy Clark are in excellent taste and match the mood of the melodrama to perfection. Under Lem Ward's expert direction, Miss Le Gallienne and Mr. Schildkraut turn in two beautiful performances, making *Uncle Harry* one of the delights of the season. It is a cleverly contrived suspense play, and might be offered to London in fair exchange for *Angel Street* (*Gaslight*).

Save Your Waste Paper — and help the War Effort

Whispers from the Wings

BY
LOOKER ON

THE Mercury Theatre, Notting Hill Gate, will re-open on August 5th with *The Man with a Load of Mischief*, Ashley Dukes' period comedy. This will be presented by the Mary Newcomb Players, and Miss Newcomb herself will appear as "The Lady," the role created by Fay Compton in the original Haymarket production in 1925.

Mary Newcomb, one of our most gifted dramatic actresses, has not acted in London since the war. She has been busy providing entertainment for the troops in the Southern Command, and since 1939 the Mary Newcomb Players have presented *In the Zone*, *French Leave*, *Gas Light*, *Jealousy* and *The Man with a Load of Mischief*. Mr. Dukes has presented the Mercury Theatre to Miss Newcomb for her season, and also waived the royalties in his play. Profits will go to provide further entertainment for the troops in the Southern Command.

In addition to Miss Newcomb, the cast includes Kynaston Reeves, Alan Trotter, Andrew Leigh, Pauline Wynn and Ruth Robinson and the play is being produced by Ashley Dukes. Mary Newcomb remains one of my favourite actresses and *The Man with a Load of Mischief* is to my mind one of the most delightful plays ever written, so this is good news indeed.

* * * * *

"Do you like plays on contemporary social issues?" "What author's work do you want to see more often?" "Do you think the theatre should be subsidised by Government, county or municipality?"

These are some of the questions asked by Andre Van Gysegem, producer of *Distant Point* at the Orpheum, Golders Green, the other week, in a questionnaire distributed to the audience. "This is the first time such an idea has been tried in this country," says Van Gysegem, "and I am doing it in all the towns *Distant Point* is visiting. By the time we have collected opinions from Bradford, Huddersfield, Golders Green, Bath, Brighton, Torquay, etc., I should have a rather interesting batch of evidence as to what the theatregoers want to see."

Apparently a very high percentage of people are returning the questionnaires, which incidentally are printed, to save paper, on strips "cut-to-waste" off big jobs.

* * * * *

ONE of the stalwarts of the Old Vic Theatre Company at the New, Freda Jackson, came to London, and prominence, through doing what so few players have the courage to do, namely, through "burning her boats."

A friend — at least, he wasn't at the time; he had never heard of her — happened to be adjudicating at a British Drama League Festival at the Opera House, Northampton, one Saturday afternoon in 1934. He was invited to see the local repertory company perform in the evening. In a by-no-means important part was Freda Jackson . . . and afterwards, meeting the company "at the back," this friend said, "You ought to come to London."

It all sounded very alluring to Freda. But she was on a very sure thing at Northampton, she said, and wondered if she ought to take the risk, with trains arriving at the London terminus, every day of the week, crowded with would-be London "stars."

Anyway, before long, she *did* take the risk. It was some time before anything happened, though. Indeed, there were times when she wondered if she hadn't made a great mistake.

Then, at the Strand Theatre on June 2nd, 1937, the public saw her as Mme. Giulia Crevelli in Elmer Rice's *Judgment Day* — and from then for Freda Jackson there was no looking back.



Antony Roger

FREDA JACKSON



Mr. and Mrs. Royd and their daughter, Marcia, arrive at their week-end cottage. Gwynne Whitby, Marjorie Fielding and George Thorpe in "Quiet Week-end," the delightful play at Wyndhams, which has created a war-time record for a comedy on recently entering its second successful year.

Ray Barcia's Star Horoscope



Below is Miss Barcia's general horoscope for readers, and a special reading featuring Malcolm Keen, the well-known actor, now appearing in 'The Maid of the Mountains' at the Coliseum. Miss Barcia is a member of 'The Dancing Years' company.

Ray Barcia

NOR about the twenty-third of July each year the Sun enters his own sign Leo for one month. This is the most important sign for all stage people and if you were born during this time you will take to the stage as a duck to water. Being the sign that rules the translation of human emotion into work it is directly creative, is called the sign of the lover, the poet, the artist, the dramatist, the actor. Leo men and women are human and given to human failings, difficult to convey when speaking astrologically because their vital impulses are so clearly connected with noble attitudes that the astrologer is tempted to spread himself and give the impression that he is talking about super-humans. There is something grand about them, even in their tragedies. They are notorious for unhappy love and being publicly disgraced, and these are just the two things they are most anxious to avoid. It is natural to the sign to avoid pettiness and take a sweeping outlook, to express his warmth in generosity and trusts that hint of the patronising, to love and expect as of royal right, a due and gratified response. How far the Leonine is able to keep such a nature un thwarted or when thwarted, to react in the direction of sanity or insanity depends on himself and the trend of his individual horoscope. Automatically taking the function of directing, amusing or instructing others it is difficult for him to accept outside authority. It wounds him vitally and when Leo suffers he suffers as he does all things, extremely. Indeed if not careful he tears himself to pieces with emotion; the problem is when things go badly to get the motivation of himself (humiliating) and control of his emotion for creative purposes. Though kind and ready to help, a Leo person meeting with no opposition sails amicably through life without questioning his right to take the lion's share. He does not give of his best until shaken up and challenged. Sociably

inclined, fond of cutting a figure in some way he has a penetrating mind and fluency of talents and likes people to know; his dignity and controlled magnetism arouse jealousies and attract disciples. Honour, principles and philosophy are very real to him and about them he is sensitive, often vulnerable. Sincere and passionate he is rarely a sensualist. The many Leo failures usually have an air of great men who, slightly bewildered, have lost their way. On the other hand you will find varieties of the genus at the top of every tree, directing business, leading Parliamentary debate, leading orchestras, piloting ships and organising factory work. They are fond of food, drink, music and conquest, admiration and sunshine. Particularly you will find them on the stage taking the lead or hoping soon to take the lead, strong of mind and physique. They are characteristically fair or tawny and broad in the shoulder, but you can pick any of them out by the high-held head and the majestic carriage.

★ Malcolm Keen

MMR. KEEN, born on the 8th August, has a personal horoscope of great positiveness and intensity. Scorpio rising gives him a clearly-defined personality, with a tendency to reserve. The pride and dignity of Leo are in a way amplified by the characteristics of the rising sign though this latter adds a tendency to despond. All planets are set above the earth, except the moon, which occupies the house of the theatre and is in harmony with the sun; this means exceptional opportunity for the exercising of talents before the world. There are some hard aspects and tough knots to be overcome in this chart, but the whole horoscope is testimony to the old idea that trials bring the power to overcome them. It is the chart of an exceptional character, ambitious, battling and persistent. Scorpio acts as outward veil to the Leo qualities mentioned above and makes him rather a difficult person to understand; there is a hardness and tendency to withdraw from communication that sometimes robs him of sympathy which would otherwise come his way in ordinary life. One feels that with all the array of brilliant mind and memory, of copious talent and philosophy there may be an underlying romantic fatalism which is the secret of this horoscope's interest, power and attraction.

Notes and Topics

AMATEUR STAGE

A N observant traveller in recent weeks cannot fail to conclude that stay-at-home holidays have developed a commendable degree of enterprise in local entertainment. Posters announce varied attractions, some giving quite substantial fixtures spread over the whole summer.

A percentage of straight plays leavens such attractions as fetes, outdoor dances, fairs, and orchestras. Some of the posters are not unamusing, as in a careful regard for invasion censorship which deletes the name of the town at the top but allows it to peep out in the title of some of the players. A very "we will amuse ourselves" spirit is noticeable in some of the descriptions of attractions.

Priestley's *I Have Been Here Before* was Haslemere's interesting choice of play.

THE Rose Mary Crawshay Prize for English literature has been awarded to Miss Sybil Rosenfeld for her book "Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces." It is an account of barnstorming from the Restoration to the arrival of permanent theatres in provincial towns (Cambridge University Press, 15/-).

A play with many qualities for amateurs is *Rebecca*, now running with Owen Nares in the lead at the Strand Theatre. The story is of that colourful type with plenty of incident which keeps the stage well occupied, and so gives the cast the support of something to grip, which means much to the non-professional actor. There is only one setting, rather a heavy interior, but once that fence is jumped the rest is easily manageable. Two good leads are required, for the parts of Maxim de Winter and his young second wife. At the Strand in July a very young actress, Gillian Howell, played this part with a most acceptable accent on youth. A touch of costume in the play will be one of its attractions for amateurs.

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama announce the awards of these Scholarships—Two Sam Heilbut (Major) Scholarships, £150 per annum including maintenance: Miss Pamela Mary Woolmore, of Lewes, Sussex, and Miss Bettina Golland, of Edgware, Middlesex. One Sam Heilbut (Minor)

Scholarship, £50 per annum: Miss Lucie Michael, of London, N.W.2. A Corporation Elocution Scholarship, £30 per annum: Miss Vyvienne Moynihan, of Maida Vale.

In July the students of the school gave two performances of *A Single Man* by H. H. Davies. The cast of eight women to three men may help to explain the choice of this rather dated play to-day, but a stronger vehicle will assist these young players. There were some enthusiastic and charming pieces of acting, and Wilfred E. Goff as the bachelor hero gave a good interpretation.

READERS will be interested and relieved to hear that despite the attentions of the enemy, the Maddermarket Theatre at Norwich survives to celebrate its twenty-first birthday, it is hoped, on September 21st next. The Norwich Players are maintaining their high level of production—*The Philanderer* was staged in July—and we may expect from Mr. Nugent Monck a worthy coming-of-age programme.

The telephone number of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association at their new address, Emanwyre House, Bernard Street, W.C.1, is Terminus 1601.

Ewell Religious Drama Society is in active production and would welcome new members. Affiliated to the Religious Drama Society, plays for production are confined to those with a religious background. Secretary is Miss Vera Matthews, 16, St. James Avenue, Ewell, Surrey.

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Stage Door Hussy . . . by Eric Johns

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gate from dawn to dusk, ready to pounce upon him the moment he left the house for the garage. Life became unbearable under such conditions and he was compelled to move, breaking a lease agreement that cost him a few hundred pounds. He chose to reside in a block of Piccadilly flats where ex-guardsmen commissioners saw that he enjoyed a more sheltered existence.

Unlike ordinary everyday mortals, stars dare not insert their names in the telephone book, or they would have no peace, even within their own four walls. Inquisitive Husses would ring them at the most inopportune moments to ask the most insane questions, or just to say "You're wonderful!" I have yet to meet the artist who can reply to that hackneyed ejaculation—politely and appropriately! The absence of one's name from "The Book" makes it difficult for managers to contact artists with whom they have not previously done business. Such inconvenience and the possible loss of a contract is hardly likely to worry a Hussy quite devoid of any sense of common decency.

Painters and writers are not bombarded in like manner. I can never understand why playgoers who have been deeply moved by an artist's work should want to make his private life a misery by gate-crashing into a world where their presence is only an embarrassment and a nuisance. It seems the oddest manner of expressing gratitude.

Charlotte Greenwood came over here a few years ago to play in *Wild Violets*. The Husses discovered her hotel and were never off the step, night or day. On several occasions she had to move her quarters as she felt her presence was an inconvenience to the management, as well as to her fellow guests. Thus did London's Gallery Girls express their appreciation of some of the heartiest laughs of their lifetime.

Robert Taylor came over to make his film, *A Yank at Oxford*, and Claridge's pavements were thickly dotted with hysterical Husses all day long, and often after midnight. I met him driving his new car round and round Berkeley Square at 2.30 one morning, with obvious pride and joy. The poor man had to wait until that ungodly hour before he could emerge unmolested to enjoy a few minutes at the wheel. Thus did inconsiderate girls who paid half-a-crown to see each new film he made, so dominate his life that only in the dead of

Robert Taylor was one of the many victims of the stage door pest described in this article.



night could he take the air, despite the fact that film-making demanded his presence at the studios as early as 6.30 each morning.

Surely an actor ought to demand some degree of respect and consideration from the public! If they are swept off their feet by a momentous performance they can show their appreciation by clapping till their hands are sore, shouting till their throats are hoarse, or even dropping a few lines of approval to the theatre.

Accosting an artist at the stage door is a cheap form of expressing one's admiration. He has his own life to live; he may be with his wife, his fiancée, or even his mother-in-law, and on such an occasion it is rather difficult to break away from the party to say a few tactful words to nameless people who have no place at all in the design of his private life.

Such constant encounters with strangers who make unexpected demands upon the artist in public can so easily lead to friction and misunderstanding between the star and those people with whom he chooses to share his off-stage life. Only a Hussy would create so embarrassing and delicate a situation. The playgoer of good taste is well on her way home before the actor emerges from the stage door.

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New Chopin play at Amersham

ON June 30th the Playhouse, Amersham, presented a new play, *Bitter Glory*, by Caryl Jenner, the producer at the theatre. The play is a dramatised version of the novel of the same name by Leon Thorne, and the principal characters are Chopin and George Sand.

This liaison between an abnormally sensitive young musician and a notorious novelist, a woman recklessly unconventional and of masculine strength of character, is shown with sympathetic understanding. These two strange and divided temperaments are curiously attracted to each other; the woman's superb vitality gives inspiration to the composer's genius, and the flame of womanhood in her provides the gentler support his weakness and illness demand. Chopin was not the first of George's lovers, but the attachment lasted



Bernard Jay.

Julian Randall and Sally Latimer in *Bitter Glory*.

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eight years, and the value of this play is that it makes clear the woman's hold over the musician as lover, nurse and friend.

The chief weakness of the play is in the characterisation of Chopin; he is a lay figure only, and we get little knowledge of his mind or the blaze of genius within. Nor are the mechanics of the plot entirely credible. Can the cruel likeness of Chopin in Sand's novel, *Lucrezia Floriani*, which causes the final break between them, have been drawn by the novelist unconsciously? One feels here that the dramatist has shirked a harder streak in George's character, the streak that caused Liszt to write, after this rift, that "she gave her butterfly the congé, vivisected and stuffed it, and added it to her collection of heroes for novels." The part provides, however, fine opportunities for the actress. George's daughter, too, a child rebellious, malicious, yet pathetic in her awkward tenderness and baffled love for Chopin, is brilliantly drawn. It is this girl's distorted jealousy and mischief-making that provide the best dramatic clashes in the play. This difficult part was played at Amersham by Marcia Powell, a young actress of quite extraordinary promise.

Julian Randall is a young actor whose reserve is always interesting. He acts intelligently with face and hands, and if his Chopin failed to blaze that was because the writing did not allow for blazing. It is, in fact, George Sand's play, and Sally Latimer vividly realised the character's bluntness, tenderness and emotional fire. This actress could teach many West End actresses their business; she has brains as well as charm.

A.W.

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